SPENCER

STEIN • BRANDT

ROSENBERG

Steve★Rogers

CAPTAIN AMERICA®

MARVEL

#13

Super-Soldier. Avenger. Agent of Hydra. He is...

Steve Rogers
CAPTAIN AMERICA

Steve Rogers' reality has been secretly rewritten by Kobik, a sentient Cosmic Cube acting under the influence of the Red Skull. In Steve's new history, a Hydra agent named Elisa Sinclair enrolled Steve in a school where he was trained to believe in Hydra's ideals--and befriended a young Helmut Zemo. Later, Steve would return to the U.S. to become the first Super-Soldier and Hydra's ultimate spy, but he remained close friends with Helmut despite the distance.

In the present, Steve gained a powerful ally by convincing Zemo that the version of history where they were friends really took place, and that the version Zemo remembered was a lie. And thanks to Avril Kincaid, the new Quasar, he's closing in on the location for where Bucky Barnes and his team of Thunderbolts are hiding out with the Cosmic Cube that started it all...

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1944.

HOW'S HE DOING IT? THERE'S *TEN* OF US!

I TOLD YA-- WE SHOULDA BET *TWENTY* GUYS.

BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME, FELLAS. SEE YOU ON THE FRONT LINES!

I THOUGHT THE GUY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE VISITING FOR A MORALE BOOST...

QUITE A *COMMOTION* IN HERE--

IT'S OUR *BIG BREAK,* CAPTAIN. APPARENTLY HYDRA'S GOT SOMEONE ON THE INSIDE WHO FEELS LIKE TALKING. SENT US A CODED MESSAGE OVER THE WIRES.

WHAT'S THE INTEL?

YOU'RE NOT GONNA BELIEVE THIS. TURNS OUT BARON ZEMO IS RIGHT HERE IN ENGLAND--IN *LONDON*. HE'S LOOKING TO TRY AND STEAL THE DRONE ROCKET THEY'RE BUILDING AT GREENWICH OBSERVATORY.

BUT NOW THAT WE KNOW HE'S COMING, WE'RE FINALLY GONNA CATCH THE MEAN OLD BASTARD, *AND* HIS SON--

...CAP?

Dear Helmut,

There is something else I need to tell you, before all of this begins.

I have tried to share everything with you--the truth as I know it, from our friendship to your bond with your father--

--but there is one thing I have held back, because I simply didn't have the strength.

It's about the time I failed you.

The time I was too late...

...and how it changed everything.

NEW JERSEY. NOW.

I MISS YOU, TOO. SO HOW IS SHE?

OH, DEAR. WELL, ***OF COURSE*** SHE DRIVES YOU CRAZY. SHE'S YOUR ***MOTHER***. BUT IT'S GOOD THAT YOU GET TO VISIT ANYWAY--

DING DONG

OH, HONEY--I HAVE TO GO, THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR.

WHAT? NO, I DIDN'T ORDER A PIZZA. ***YES,*** I SAW THE KALE SALAD IN THE REFRIGERATOR. GIVE MY LOVE TO THE GIRLS. TELL THEM I--

--MISS THEM.

GOOD EVENING, NEIGHBOR--

--MIGHT I BORROW SOME SUGAR?

AND WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR **NAME** WAS AGAIN?

B-BOB. BOB HOFFSTETTER.

HM. AND WHAT IS IT YOU DO, BOB?

I-I'M A CLAIMS ADJUSTER...

I SEE. AND DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

S-SURE. YOU'RE **BARON ZEMO--**

SO YOU **RECOGNIZE** ME, THEN?

I GUESS-- I MEAN, FROM THE TV OR WHEREVER.

HH. IT'S A LOVELY HOME YOU HAVE--DO YOU LIVE HERE ALONE?

NO--I-- MY **WIFE** LIVES HERE, AND--AND MY TWO DAUGHTERS, CHELSEA AND HANNAH...

BUT--THEY'RE NOT HERE THIS WEEK! THEY'RE VISITING MY MOTHER-IN-LAW IN WISCONSIN. YOU DON'T HAVE TO...WORRY, I MEAN--ABOUT THEM.

OH, I'M NOT. TELL ME, THOUGH--DO YOU **LOVE** THEM?

SORRY?

DO YOU LOVE THEM?

Y-YES--

Y-YES... I LOVE THEM... I LOVE THEM **VERY MUCH.**

THAT'S GOOD. THAT'S GOOD, BOB...

"...FAMILY IS VERY IMPORTANT."

You should know that both you and your father fought valiantly that day.

You stood up against impossible odds--

--and stayed true to what you believed.

I, on the other hand--

--was, like always, caught between two worlds.

WOO-HOO! 'BOUT TIME YOU SHOWED UP, CAP! WE WERE GETTIN' TO HAVE ALL THE FUN *WITHOUT* YOU!

BUCKY--

--NO!

HELMUT-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I TOLD YOU--WE DON'T HAVE TO *KILL* HIM!

IT IS *TOO LATE,* STEVEN! WE CANNOT LET THEM STOP US--

YOU FOOLS!

YOUR INTERFERENCE HAS ONLY HASTENED YOUR *DEFEAT!*

TONIGHT THIS ROCKET WILL REACH NEW YORK--AND STRIKE THE VERY HEART OF ALLIED POWER!

OH, TO BE THERE--

"--WHEN THE BOMB DROPS."

SOKOVIA. NOW.

OUR FORCES ARE MAKING GOOD PROGRESS, FATHER-- WE EXPECT TO HAVE THE TOWN TAKEN BY NIGHTFALL.

MOST *ENCOURAGING*, SIN--BUT THE TOWN IS **NOT** OUR OBJECTIVE TODAY--

BOOM!

THIS IS.

ARE THOSE--?

YES, SIN, THEY *ARE*.

THE KEY TO OUR VICTORY IN THE WAR AGAINST S.H.I.E.L.D.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- THIS PLACE WASN'T EVEN GUARDED.

THAT'S BECAUSE NO ONE EVEN ***KNEW*** THEY WERE HERE...

WHEN THE SOVIET UNION FELL AND SOKOVIA BECAME INDEPENDENT, GENERAL NOVOTY USED THE WEAPONS THE RUSSIANS HAD LEFT BEHIND AS LEVERAGE.

SO LONG AS HE AGREED TO THE DISARMAMENT TREATY, THE WESTERN POWERS TURNED A BLIND EYE TO HIS... ECCENTRICITIES.

BUT THE TRUTH IS EVEN ***HE*** HAD NO IDEA WHERE ALL THE WEAPONS WERE. BECAUSE, LOATH AS THE WORLD IS TO ACCEPT THE REALITY, WE HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN QUITE ***CARELESS*** WITH OUR WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION.

THAT'S WHAT DESTROYED THE ***RED EMPIRE,*** YOU KNOW--

--POOR BOOKKEEPING.

EARLIER.

DOCTOR SELVIG-- WHERE IS STEVEN?

ER-- CALLED AWAY ON S.H.I.E.L.D. BUSINESS, I'M AFRAID.

GOOD.

"GOOD"? OH-- YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TRY TO **KILL** ME AGAIN...

-SIGH- NO. THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT TO **DISCUSS** WITH YOU.

EXPANSION.

AS STEVEN'S PLAN COMES CLOSER TO FRUITION, HE WILL NEED MORE RESOURCES THAN WE TWO ALONE CAN PROVIDE.

I SEE-- AND YOU'VE DISCUSSED THIS WITH HIM?

IT IS A... SURPRISE?

HH. WELL, ACTUALLY, ON THIS POINT, WE **AGREE.** AND I MIGHT HAVE JUST THE SOLUTION.

YOU SEE, WHEN I OVERSAW THE PLEASANT HILL PROGRAM, AS NEW INMATES WERE ADMITTED, I ADMINISTERED A TRACKING CHIP. S.H.I.E.L.D. BELIEVED IT WAS FOR THEIR BENEFIT, BUT IN TRUTH--IT WAS A RESOURCE FOR HYDRA.

VERY INTERESTING. WHICH INMATES?

YOU MEAN WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ONES WHO ESCAPED WITH KOBIK?

ALL OF THEM.

I have known you for a lifetime, Helmut.

I have marveled at your perseverance--

--your commitment to our cause.

You gave up so much--

--and still the world demanded more.

Still it took so much from you.

I LOVE YOU, MY SON.

Still it made you suffer.

CAP, GET BACK!

BUCKY! WHAT--WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

DON'T WORRY, CAP-- I CAN ALTER THE TRAJECTORY OF THE ROCKET FROM HERE-- SO THAT INSTEAD OF THE BIG APPLE, IT TOUCHES DOWN IN THE ***MIDDLE*** OF THE ***ATLANTIC!***

WE'LL SEND ZEMO STRAIGHT INTO THE OCEAN WHERE HE ***BELONGS!***

NOW.

I MYSELF DON'T HAVE ANY FAMILY LEFT, I'M AFRAID. OR AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I HAD THOUGHT UNTIL RECENTLY--

"--WHEN SOMEONE CLOSE TO ME REVEALED THEMSELVES TO BE...SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY. SOMETHING THAT MIGHT AS WELL BE FAMILY--

"--WARTS AND ALL."

IT'S AN ODD SITUATION, BUT ONE I AM GRATEFUL FOR. THIS LIFE IS CHALLENGING ENOUGH WITHOUT HAVING PEOPLE WE LOVE IN IT.

I'M SURE YOU OF ALL PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THAT.

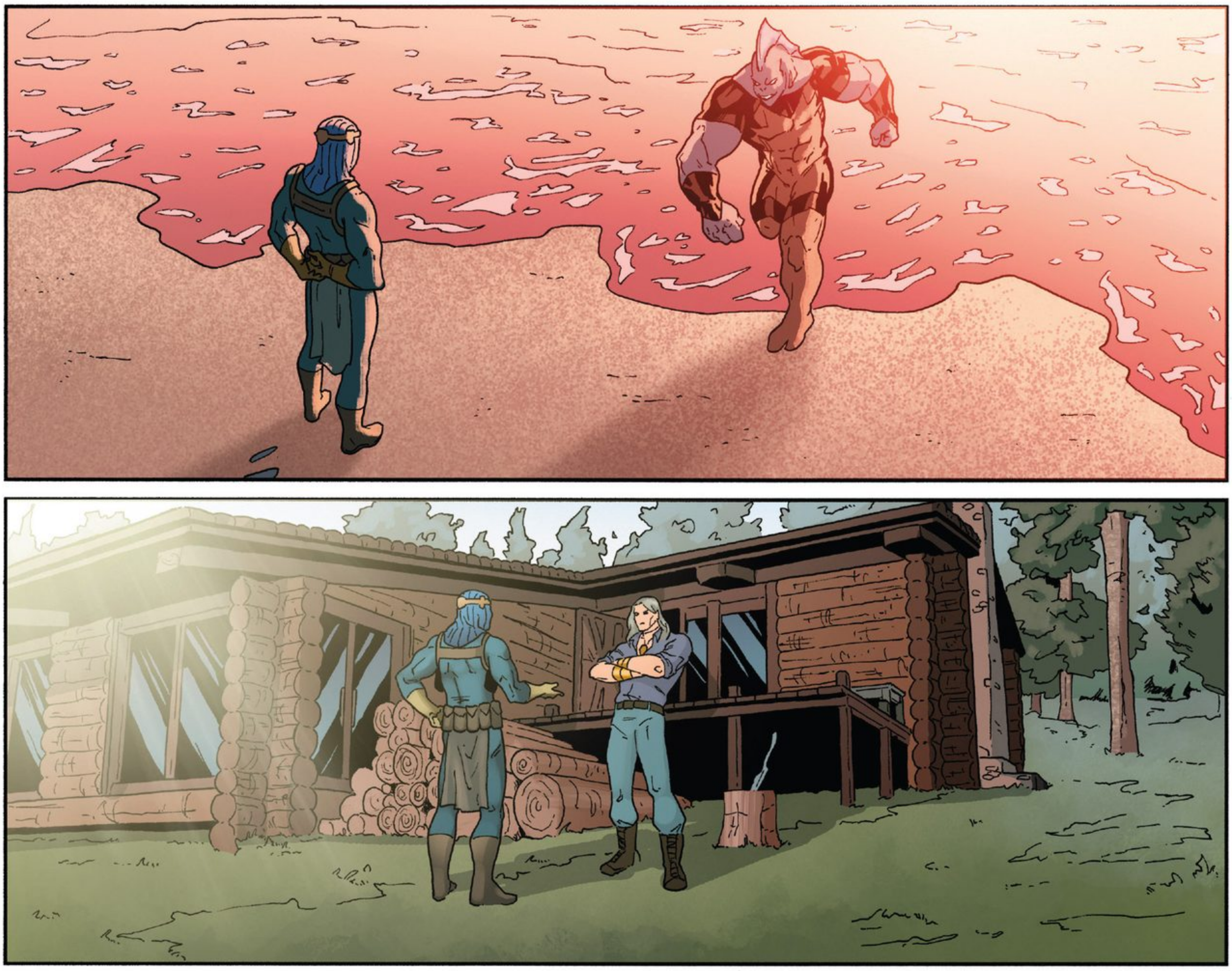
AND IN THE SPIRIT OF CELEBRATION OVER THIS NEWS, I HAVE EMBARKED ON A CONSIDERABLE UNDERTAKING. A ***GIFT*** OF SORTS. BUT IT REQUIRES ME TO LAY A SOLID FOUNDATION IF IT IS TO SUCCEED.

WHICH LEADS ME HERE, TO THIS HOUSE. TO ***YOU.***

PLEASE-- DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO ME--JUST--JUST DON'T HURT MY ***FAMILY--***

OH? IS ***THAT*** WHAT WORRIES YOU, BOB? IT NEEDN'T. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF HURTING YOU. IN FACT, YOU ARE GOING TO BE A GREAT HELP TO ME--

"--YOU AND MANY OTHERS."



YES, WE ALL FILL THE VOID IN OUR LIVES WITH PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT US. IT HELPS US STAVE OFF THE DARKNESS WITHIN.

NOT ALL OF US CAN BE AS LUCKY AS **YOU,** THOUGH. I AM CURIOUS, HOWEVER--

--WHAT DID YOU **DO** WITH THE FAMILY THAT LIVED HERE? DID YOU **KILL** THEM, BOB?

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I--I--I'D NEVER HURT MY--

DID YOU REMEMBER THIS HOUSE AS YOURS? DID YOU TRY TO RETURN AND FACE THAT CONFUSION?

PLEASE-- I DON'T UNDERSTAND--

OF COURSE YOU DON'T. SOMEHOW, YOU REMAIN BOB. BUT YOU WERE ONCE SOMETHING **DIFFERENT**. SOMETHING TRULY TERRIBLE.

M-MISTER-- I'M NOT W-WHO YOU THINK I AM--

BUT YOU ARE. AND YOU ARE THE FIRST AND LAST PIECE OF THIS PUZZLE...

YOU HAVE SUFFERED SO MUCH. EVEN MORE THAN THE REST OF US.

YOU HAVE BEEN LOST AND ABANDONED, ROBBED OF YOUR TRUE SELF. LEFT ALONE.

NNN--

BUT YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT ANY OF THAT ANYMORE--

YOU ARE WITH YOUR TRUE FAMILY NOW.

It was my failure that day that cost your father his life, Helmut--

--and I have never stopped trying to earn your forgiveness since then. But now, I can offer you something else.

Now I can begin to make things right.

I will give you the revenge you so richly deserve.

You will lead an army.

And together--

--we will change the world.

NEXT

ZEMO'S "RETURN OF THE MASTERS" CONTINUES IN

THUNDERBOLTS #10

THUNDERBOLTS #11

THE STORY EXPANDS IN

UNCANNY AVENGERS #22

ZONE